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Easter Sermon.

MARK 16, 1—8.

The Lord is risen indeed! Hallelujah! Amen.

IN THE RISEN LORD DEARLY BELOVED:—

When Good Friday with its saddening scene was drawing to a close, the Son of God was placed into the tomb. A stone is rolled to the door of the sepulcher. The grave is sealed and a watch is set. The Sabbath day passes by in silence. Soon the Easter morning begins to dawn. There is a mysterious trembling in the earth, and suddenly a heavenly brightness encircles the tomb where Jesus had been laid. An angel from heaven rolls the stone away from the door of the sepulcher, and, behold, the grave is empty. The terror-stricken watchmen hasten to the city, and break the news to the enemies of Christ: The stone is rolled away from the door of the sepulcher, and the grave is empty! A wonderful message they brought to Jerusalem! But to the enemies of Jesus it was not a message of joy; it was a message that filled them with fear.

But there were yet other messengers of Christ's resurrection. Early on the morning of the first day of the week three women hasten to the tomb of Jesus with spices and ointments, intending to anoint His body. On the way they ask each other, "Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulcher?" But lo, they see the grave opened and the stone already rolled away. What may this mean? As they approach, they behold a young man in a long white garment. They are told, "Be not affrighted; ye seek Jesus of Nazareth which was crucified: He is risen, He is not here!" Trembling from fright they leave the sepulcher and hasten to Jerusalem. They also bring a message to the city. They tell the friends of Jesus, "The stone is rolled away! The grave is empty!" It is

the same wonderful message that was brought by the soldiers. Yet to the disciples of Jesus it was a message full of comfort and gladness.

The stone is rolled away! The grave is empty! Jesus is risen! Though this Easter message has been proclaimed for over eighteen hundred years, it never grows old. It continues to be a message of joy, of comfort, and of life. To-day this message is heard from many pulpits. It dries the tears of the sorrowing; it comforts those who mourn; it gives rest to the weary; it causes all Christians everywhere to rejoice with exceeding great joy. It is the message I bring to you to-day as an ambassador of Christ:

THE STONE IS ROLLED AWAY:

- I. *From the grave of the Lord;*
- II. *From the hearts of the Christians;*
- III. *From the graves of our dead.*

I.

The stone is rolled away from the grave of the Lord. The Lord is no longer in the grave. He is risen, and thus is proved with power to be the Son of God.

If the stone were not rolled away, if Christ were still in the grave—what then? Then Jesus would not have been the Son of God, but a false prophet and a deceiver. Then He could not have been the Christ. For the Scriptures had declared not only that Christ should suffer and die, but also that He should arise again! In the 16th Psalm we read, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption." Christ was to arise from the grave without having seen corruption. Christ Himself also had foretold His resurrection. He had claimed to have the power to raise Himself from the dead. He said of Himself, "I am the Resurrection and the Life." "I have power to lay down my life, and I have power to take it up again." He had also said that He would make use of this power. He said to His disciples, "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and the Son of man shall be delivered . . . , and the *third day He shall rise again.*" He told His enemies, "Break this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." It was because of these words of Jesus that the sepulchre was sealed and a watch was set. —Now if Jesus would have remained in the grave, He would not have been the Resurrection and the Life. If death would have held Him, death would have been stronger than He, He would have been a mere man. It would mean that He could not keep His word, that He attempted to destroy death and failed, that He was not the Author of life, that He was not the Son of God. Moreover, had Jesus remained in the grave, His

claims would be false, His teachings would be worthless, He Himself would have been a deceiver and blasphemer. Hence, if He had remained in the grave, Christianity would be a deception and a fraud. Then those who mock the religion of Jesus would be in the right. Christianity is built upon Christ as its foundation. Now if Christ were dead we might justly cast aside the Christian religion.

But, behold, the stone is rolled away from the grave of the Lord. A heavenly messenger brings the glad tidings, "He is risen, He is not here!" Yes, Jesus is risen from the dead. He lives and is "declared to be the Son of God with power." He had often claimed to be equal with God and had made good His claim by the miracles which He performed, so that those who had seen His wonderful works were led to confess that He was the Christ, the Son of the living God. But the greatest proof for His divinity is His resurrection from the dead. His resurrection proves that He is God's Son. For no man ever will and ever can arise from the dead by his own power. A man has the power to destroy his life, but once lost, he has not the power to regain it. Now if Christ arose, He consequently was more than a mere man; He was what He claimed to be, the Son of God. And if Christ is the Son of God, then Christianity rests on a firm foundation and can never be overthrown. Oh, if you are inclined to doubt that Jesus is the Son of God, and that the religion of Jesus is true, come to the empty grave and see what to-day is done. Jesus is risen, and the stone is rolled away from His grave. Is not that proof enough for the divinity of Christ? O that all unbelievers might be cured of their folly of denying the divinity of Jesus! O that all Christians would banish every doubt and joyfully confess that Jesus is the Son of God! For Jesus is risen from the dead. The grave is empty. The stone is rolled away.

II.

The stone is rolled away also from the hearts of the Christians. Sin with its consequences is, as it were, a heavy stone resting upon the sinner's heart, filling him with fear and unrest. The resurrection of Jesus removes this stone from the sinner's heart. Sin need no longer trouble the Christian's heart. Were the stone not rolled away and Christ still in the grave, what then? Then Christ would have failed to redeem us. A dead Savior would be no savior. As our Mediator, Christ carried the load of our sin and died for our transgressions. For us He groaned under the infinite wrath of God. Burdened with our sins He went into the grave. Had He remained in the grave, that would imply that He had been unable to bear the load of our sins, that He had been crushed by God's wrath, that

death had gained the victory over Him. Were the stone not rolled away there would be no redemption. — And if there were no redemption, our faith also would be vain. “If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.” So it would be. We would then be yet in our sins. All our sins would rest upon us, not atoned for and unforgiven. The curse would still be upon us. We could never escape the wages of sin. There would be no hope for us. We would be doomed, lost, eternally damned. If Christ be not raised, there would be no Gospel, the Bible would be useless to us. We would be in an utterly sad plight. We would be of all men most miserable. Who would roll away the stone that lies heavily upon our hearts, the stone that is so heavy that we ourselves cannot move it? Ah, it would forever remain unmoved. There would be no remission of sin.

But, lo, with the resurrection of Jesus the stone is removed. The angel told the women, “Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth *which was crucified*; He is risen, He is not here.” Note well, the angel says, The *Crucified* is risen. The Crucified is He who took the world’s place under the Law, He to whom the world’s sin was imputed, He who bore the world’s punishment. He is the world’s Substitute. When His work was done He cried, “It is finished.” He bowed His head and died. The atonement has been effected, and He that made the atonement is put into the grave. — What now, beloved? A living Savior? Are we really redeemed? Is the wrath of God appeased? Is God satisfied with the price Jesus paid to ransom our souls? The open grave answers all these questions. The Crucified has left the grave. The Father raised up His Son. He raised up our Substitute, Him who was crucified for us. Hence God is satisfied with the work of Christ. God accepted the ransom He paid. By raising Christ God acquitted the world and forgave the world’s sin. When Christ died, He paid the world’s debt; when the Father raised Him up, He solemnly declared that the world’s debt was paid in full. This truth the apostle emphasizes when he writes, “Christ was delivered for our offenses, and raised again for our justification.” When God raised Christ up, He justified Him, He declared Him just, absolved Him from sin, and set Him free. Christ, however, bore *our* sins. He had no sins of His own. When God therefore absolved Him, He absolved Him *from our sins*, He forgave *our* sins, He justified *us*. Christ was raised for *our* justification.

But, you ask, does Christ’s resurrection concern me also? Why should it *not* concern you? It concerned the women that came to the grave of Jesus, and they were sinners. It concerned the dis-

ciples; they were to be told of it; and the disciples were sinners, they had all forsaken Jesus. It concerned Peter. The angel said, "Tell His disciples, *and Peter.*" Peter was a sinner, a sinner who had three times denied his Lord. The message was for them, though they were sinners. Why should it not concern you? When Christ died, He died for *all*, and in Him all died. When Christ was acquitted He was acquitted for all, and *in Him all were acquitted.* In raising Christ God acquitted the entire world. You also are not excepted. Christ's resurrection indeed concerns you. He was raised for your justification. Believe this joyful and comforting Easter message. Believe it, and the stone of sin and sadness is lifted from your heart.

O glad tidings! Joyful Easter greetings! Now sin need no longer trouble your heart. Christ took your sins with Him into the grave. He came forth and left your sins in the grave. Thus the burden is removed from your heart. Now the threats and the curse of the Law need no longer fill your soul with unrest. Christ has borne the curse of the Law. The Father raised Him up. Hence the curse is lifted from you. Now death cannot harm you, since Jesus is risen, and death is swallowed up in victory. Hell and its prince, the devil, are now shorn of their power. What is there left to trouble and to harm you, dearest friends? Nothing! Ah, nothing! The stone is rolled away from the hearts of the Christians.

III.

The stone is rolled away from the graves of our dead. The resurrection of Jesus establishes our future resurrection.

Were the stone not rolled away and Christ still in the grave, what then? Then we could never expect to arise from the grave. The hope of our future resurrection rests upon the resurrection of Jesus. Job expects to see God in his flesh with his bodily eyes. He expects to arise again because his Redeemer lives and shall stand at the latter day upon the earth, calling His, "Come forth!" to all that are asleep. Now if Jesus Himself were still dead, He could not raise the dead at the last day. Then there could be no resurrection. Then the grave would be a place full of darkness and gloom. It would speak to us of nothing but corruption and decay. Worms would destroy our bodies, and that would be the end. "Rest in peace," "Sleeping in Jesus," such inscriptions on our tombstones would be meaningless phrases. If Christ be not raised, then those who fell asleep in Jesus have perished, they are hopelessly lost. Then the Christian's tombstone could fitly bear the inscription, "He trusted in Jesus, but he is lost."

But, behold, the stone is rolled away, the grave is empty! Jesus is risen from the dead! The Redeemer lives! There is a resurrection. Jesus has said, "I am the Resurrection and the Life: he that believeth in me shall never die." "Because I live, ye shall live also." "Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life, and *I will raise him up at the last day.*" Three times Jesus says, "I will raise him up at the last day." Jesus will keep His word. He Himself arose from the dead. He has power over death and the grave. The grave could not hold Jesus. The grave cannot hold those whom Jesus has promised to raise. The open grave of Jesus has changed our graves into sleeping chambers. Easter has taken all terror out of the tomb, so that we need fear the tomb no more than a weary laborer fears the couch on which he rests during the night. Easter has changed our graveyards into cemeteries, sleeping places. Now he that sleeps does not sleep forever. He sleeps till the night is past, and arises when morning comes. On the morning of the resurrection day all those who are asleep in the dust of the earth will hear the voice of Jesus and will come forth out of the graves. The stone is rolled away from the graves of our dead.

The stone is rolled away, the grave is empty, Jesus is risen! Hear it, all ye that would doubt that Jesus is the Son of God, ye that would doubt His word, ye that reject Christianity! Do you not see the empty grave? Do you not see that the stone is rolled away? Cease from your unbelief, cast away your doubts. Believe in Him who was crucified, but is risen again.—The stone is rolled away, the grave is empty, Jesus is risen! Hear it, ye who are burdened with cares, and griefs, and troubles, and doubts! Hear it, ye who labor under a load of sin! Come forth to-day and rejoice over the resurrection of Him who was crucified for you. In Christ God absolved you from all your sins. Do not, oh, do not remain downcast and sad. As you leave this church to-day leave it with the conviction that you are justified in God's sight, that your sins are all forgiven.—The stone is rolled away, the grave is empty, Jesus is risen! Hear it, ye who mourn at the graves of departed friends! The time shall come when all graves will be opened, when we shall pass with Jesus into that heavenly Galilee, where death is unknown and where there shall be no more graves.—Believing soul, rejoice and be exceedingly glad! I bring you the joyful Easter message, "Jesus is risen, He is not here!" Let your heart reply, "Hallelujah! I know that my Redeemer liveth! For the stone is rolled away!" Hallelujah! Amen.

P. B.

Sermon Preached After a Storm.

GEN. 11, 1—9.

DEAR BRETHREN:—

The text just read to you is a continuation of our Old Testament series. It is a text highly appropriate for this occasion, the first service after the fearful storm which ruined our church; yea, it almost seems as if this text had been reserved for this occasion so that we might draw lessons from it which otherwise would not have been drawn from it. Basing, then, our discourse upon this text, our subject is—

THE BUILDING OF THE TOWER OF BABEL.

I.

Our text tells us that the whole earth was of one language and of one speech, and that when men journeyed from the East, they found a plain and dwelt there. And they said one to another, "Go to, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar. And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth."

These people resolved to build a city and a tower. That in itself was not wrong. But the reason why, and the purpose for which, they did it was wrong. Two men may do the same thing, and yet it is not the same thing. One man does his work prompted by a right motive, another does the same work prompted by a wrong motive. Two men went up to the temple to pray, a Pharisee and a publican. Both prayed. The prayer of the one was pleasing to God, the prayer of the other was an abomination to God. Cain and Abel both brought sacrifices to God. The sacrifice of Abel was accepted, the sacrifice of Cain was rejected. To build a city, to rear a tower, is not wrong. But these people of the text were moved by a wrong spirit. Pride prompted them. They said, "Let us make us a name." In a like strain Nebuchadnezzar spoke when he said, "Is not this great Babylon, that *I* have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of *my* power, and for the honor of *my* majesty?" The people of the text were confounded and scattered; Nebuchadnezzar became a beast of the field, ate grass as oxen, and was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws. Thus God punished their pride.

Had pride prompted us, my brethren, ten years ago to purchase this church, had the language of our heart been: "*We are the*

people, and *we have the church!*" then, to-day, we would have to confess that the Lord has smitten us, not in love, but in anger. Again, would we now rebuild our church, not to the glory of God, but to our own glory, then we would be committing the same sin that the people of our text committed. No, whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, we should do all to the glory of God. He says: "I am the Lord; that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images." And Jesus says, "How can ye believe, which receive honor one of another, and seek not the honor that cometh from God only?" To build or rebuild a church is not wrong. On the contrary, it is a good thing. To the everlasting glory of the Roman centurion, who besought Jesus to heal a sick servant, it is written that the elders of the Jews said, "He loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue." But even the good work of building a house of God can become a sin, if that work is not done to the glory of God. Hence, let us be warned by the example of the people in our text, and let us at all times and in all places, in all that we do, seek the glory of God.

Not only the motive, however, which moved those people to build that city and that tower was wrong, but also the means which they employed.

II.

God had given men His Word, His promise of the coming Savior who should bruise the hellish Serpent's head. This Word they should believe. To it they should cling. To hear it preached they should assemble themselves. It should unite them in faith and hope and love. But what did they do? They set the Word and promise of God aside. They substituted another means. They believed that the tower they were rearing would unite them and keep them together as one family.

This teaches us an important lesson, namely, that the only proper means of building up a congregation and of uniting its members is the preaching of the Word. What was it that made the three thousand who became Christians on the first Pentecost Sunday to be of one heart and one mind? It was the preaching of the Word. What was it that made citizens of Rome brethren of citizens at Jerusalem? It was the preaching of the Word.

Praiseworthy as it is to have beautiful churches, even the most magnificent building cannot change the heart, or keep men with Christ. This can be done solely and alone by the Word of God. A church-building, it is true, should be made as attractive as possible in order to bring men under the influence of the Word; but

the Word, and the Word alone, can change the heart and unite men in the faith.

The people of our text used their tower as a wrong means with which to *unite* themselves, and they used it also as a wrong means with which to *secure* themselves. They knew of the Flood that had caused so much havoc on the earth, and now they were building this tower, which should reach into heaven, in order that they might have a place of refuge if another flood should come. They would trust to a tower of their own making rather than to the promise of God.

Let us, dear brethren, not follow their example. Let us lift up our eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh our help. Our help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth. Let us say of the Lord, He is our Refuge and our Fortress: our God; in Him will we trust. Let us cast all our care upon Him, for He careth for us.

III.

A third point that we notice is that the Lord quashed the project of these people. We read: "And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the children of men builded. And the Lord said, Behold, the people is one, and they have one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city. Therefore is the name of it called Babel: because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the Lord scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth." These words tell us that the Lord rules supreme. It is He, the Almighty, who took cognizance of these people and spoiled their plans. Man proposes, God disposes.

This the Lord has taught us, too, by the visitation which has come upon us. We as a congregation were never before in a better financial condition than last Sunday. With the help of a loan we had just paid off our mortgage, and were beginning to see light in our darkness. But lo, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, our fondest hopes were blasted. A terrific storm struck our church and damaged it to an extent of about three thousand dollars. This quashed many a project and spoiled many a plan. But it was the Lord who did it, for the Scripture says: "The Lord hath His way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of His feet." And the prophet writes: "Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?" Without His almighty will noth-

ing comes to pass in heaven or on earth: neither good nor evil. Not a sparrow can fall to the ground without His will, yea, not a hair of our head can perish without His consent. How much less, then, can, without His will, so much damage be done to a house of His abode?

IV.

A fourth point that we want to notice in the text is God's mercy. God did not say: "Let the earth open her mouth and swallow these men and their tower." Nor did He say: "Let fire fall from heaven, and consume them in a moment." No, He only said: "Let us go down and scatter them. They deserve death, but shall only be banished."

Thus God has dealt in mercy also with us. He did not deal with us after our sins, nor reward us according to our iniquities. No, He dealt mercifully with us. Had He sent the storm an hour or so sooner, lives would have been lost. I myself might not be standing here to-day. Hence let us not murmur or complain, but rather praise God for His mercy. How easily also might our whole church have been overthrown and laid even with the ground! O how much worse off might we be than we are! Verily, the Lord has dealt mercifully with us.

V.

A fifth point that we see in the text is God's wisdom. It was God's intention and command for men to fill the earth. But men would not. They wanted to build a tower in order that they might not be scattered. But by confounding their language God scattered them. What a wise method did He choose in carrying out His plans for the welfare of the human race!

My brethren! God had wise reasons also for sending the calamity that befell us. Not should this misfortune scatter us, but rather unite us, unite us more closely than ever. Not only should every man bear his own burden, but "bear ye also one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."

One purpose, no doubt, which the Lord had in sending us this affliction, was to bring us to repentance. He would have us humble ourselves before Him and ask His pardon. He would have us smite upon our breast and say, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner."

But, no doubt, He also had other reasons for doing what He did.

God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform.

When He wanted much people to be saved alive in Egypt, He had Joseph sold into slavery and cast into prison. When He wanted Jesus to be born at Bethlehem, He had the Roman emperor

Caesar Augustus issue a decree which brought Mary from Nazareth to Bethlehem. And who knows for what purpose God has sent us this trouble? Undoubtedly God had wise reasons for doing what He did. Perhaps He would have us own a better and safer church than we had. Pretty our church was, as all admitted who saw it, and yet also of our church we had to say that it was not perfect, but that, like in all things, there was still room for improvement. Perhaps the Lord intends us to have a more churchly-looking church. But whatever reasons He may have, we firmly believe that "all things work together for good to them that love God." Therefore—

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust Him for His grace;
Behind a frowning Providence
He hides a smiling face.

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take;
The clouds ye so much dread
Are big with mercy, and shall break
In blessings on your head.

VI.

Finally, let us draw encouragement from our text. The people of that time who wanted to build said, "Go to, let us build us a city! Go to, let us build us a tower!" They encouraged each other in their work. They were unanimous. They were resolute.

Let us follow them in this respect. Let us provoke one another to good works, to patience, to faith, to love, to fidelity, to liberality. Let us cheer, comfort, and strengthen one another.

And we certainly have reason to encourage each other; for even strangers encourage us. Standing here in this Sunday school one day last week, an utter stranger came in and said, "Sad thing this! Very sad! I am not of your denomination, but I presume this help will be accepted," and he handed me a five-dollar note. Thanking him for his kindness and asking him his name, he replied, "No name. Perhaps I can give you more later on." And he left. I know him not, he is a stranger to me, his name we cannot record in our books. But the Lord knows him, and, we hope, has written his name in the book of life.

O, then, if total strangers encourage us so, should we not encourage one another? Let the misfortune that has befallen us move us to repent, to love the Word of our God, to frequent His house more regularly, and to give for His cause more cheerfully and more liberally.

And now, may the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us: and may He establish the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands may He establish for Jesus' sake. Amen. O. K.

Outlines for Sermons on the Gospel-Lessons.

Third Sunday after Easter.

JOHN 16, 16—23.

The words of our text are taken from the last conversation our Lord held with His beloved disciples before His great suffering and death. In this discourse He tells them that now the time is at hand when He must go to His Father through suffering and death for the salvation of mankind. He speaks to them about His death and the sorrow that would soon fill their hearts lest they should be offended. But He also comforts His disciples. He shows them how expedient it is for them that He should leave them and go to His Father; He promises them that He will send the Comforter from the Father unto them, the Spirit of Truth, who will guide them into all truth concerning Him, their Lord and Savior, and again fill their hearts with peace and rejoicing. And especially in our text the Lord comforts His disciples, and assures them that their sorrow and anguish shall last a little while only, that soon their sorrow shall be turned into joy. This is every true Christian's comfort.

ONLY A LITTLE WHILE AND OUR SORROW SHALL BE TURNED INTO JOY—THAT IS THE CHRISTIAN'S COMFORT.

I. *It is true, a Christian has to undergo many a sorrow and anguish.*

a. Christ in our text predicts to His disciples His suffering and death. It is only a little while and they shall not see Him, v. 16a. As they are not able to understand Him, vv. 17. 18, He explains His words more fully. After a little while they will weep and lament and be sorrowful, whilst the world will rejoice, vv. 19. 20. And so it came to pass. After a very short time, a few hours, the Lord was taken prisoner and put to death by His enemies. And how the world, how His enemies, Jews and Gentiles, did rejoice, how the prince of this world, Satan, rejoiced, as though he and his host of darkness had won the victory in the fierce battle with the Lord!

b. This is a picture of the life of a true Christian, a true believer, in this world. Here our hearts are often filled with sorrow, and we find many reasons to weep and lament. a. A Christian is not exempt from the common evils and misfortunes of mankind. He sometimes has to suffer poverty and want, or death enters his house and takes one of his beloved ones from him, or some other great misfortune befalls him. Yea, a Christian often has to bear a

greater share of these evils than many an unbeliever. We can see it time and again that the world rejoices, whilst the Christians weep and lament, v. 20. Ps. 73, 1—9. 12. β . But still greater and heavier are the spiritual sorrows they have to endure. Christians must face and struggle against the temptations of the Evil One, the devil. This enemy of theirs always attempts to destroy their spiritual life. Such is his evil counsel, to “seduce us into misbelief, despair, and other great shame and vice,” to beguile us into false doctrine or an ungodly life. We have to battle against this world and their manifold snares, and if we run not with them, they will hate us, John 15, 19. Our own flesh lusts against the spirit, so that we cannot do what we would (Gal. 5, 17), causing us to complain with the apostle: Rom. 7, 24. γ . And still more, there are times when we do not see the Lord. It seems to us as though He no longer were our dear Father in Christ, but our enemy. It seems to us as though He had turned His face from us, as though we had lost our faith in Him. All our prayers seem to be in vain, Ps. 77, 8—10. 85, 6. We no longer feel His grace, but His wrath seems to be over us. This is the deepest sorrow and anguish a Christian may experience in his spiritual life. It is true that in the world we have tribulation. (John 16, 33.) We must through much tribulation enter the kingdom of God. (Acts 14, 22.) Many a Christian has already lost heart in the temptations and sorrows of this world, and forsaken his Savior. But we have nothing to fear. In all our sorrows and afflictions we have true, sweet comfort.

II. *It is only a little while, and all our sorrow shall be turned into everlasting joy.*

a. That was the comfort the Lord gave to His disciples: After a little while you shall see me, v. 16. It is true, the sorrow of that small band of followers of Christ was deep when their dear Lord was dead. Gloom and despair seemed to settle around them. But it was only a little while. On the third day Christ arose again in glory, and the hearts of His disciples were comforted. And above all, when their exalted Savior sent them the Spirit of Truth, then their sorrow was turned into joy and they no more remembered their anguish, vv. 20. 21. Then they understood His suffering and death, knowing and believing that by it He took away the sins of the world. It is true, even now the apostles still had to suffer much for His name's sake, but this joy in the Lord no man could take from them, v. 22. And after a short time, when they had fought a good fight and finished their course, the Lord delivered them from all evil and took them to Himself, into heaven, to everlasting joy and blessedness.

b. So it is with us who believe in Jesus Christ. We know we have much tribulation in this world. But it is only for a little while. How short is our life. Our days are as a shadow that passes away. (Ps. 144, 4. 102, 11. 103, 15. 16.) We are here on a journey to our heavenly home. What matters it if we have to undergo many inconveniences and hardships? And even in this little while of sorrow our Lord does not leave us comfortless. He sends us the Comforter, His Holy Ghost, and with Him peace and joy into our hearts, that we may rejoice in all our tribulations. And soon our course here is finished, and our dear Savior will take us from this vale of tears to the joyful mansions of His Father's house. There He shall wipe away all tears from our eyes. (Rev. 7, 14—17.) Then we shall come with rejoicing and reap in joy. (Ps. 126.) And our joy no man shall take from us.

G. M.

Sermon Outline on Rom. 3, 24.

How a sinner may be and is justified before God is a question of no common importance to every child of man. And yet, how little has this question been understood! What false and dangerous notions many have had concerning it— notions absolutely contrary to the Word of God, and inconsistent with the whole analogy of faith. How, then, can man be justified before his God? Our text gives us the only correct answer.

ON JUSTIFICATION.

I. *The nature and ground of justification.*

a. The true *nature* of justification. 1. What justification implies. There is a supposition, a charge, and that charge is sin against God. Man was created in the image of God, holy and happy. But man fell, sinned, and on account of sin was condemned. And by the fall and sin of Adam we all fell and came short of the favor of God. Gen. 3, 1—7. Rom. 5, 12. 2. What justification includes. It includes *a.* Forgiveness of sin, pardon. 2 Cor. 5, 21. Ps. 103, 2. 3. It is not a partial but a full and universal forgiveness. It extends to all sins, original and actual; sins of omission and commission, past and present. God does not impute sins to sinners, but declares sinners righteous; regards and treats them as if innocent and holy. Is. 1, 18. *β.* Restoration and everlasting enjoyment of God's favor, love, and mercy. Rom. 8, 33. Jer. 31, 3. Gen. 4, 7a.

b. The only *ground* of justification. *a.* Not our good works, not our worthiness. *β.* But "the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."

1 John 2, 2. He came, suffered, and died to procure our justification, Matt. 18, 11.—Gal. 3, 13. 1 Pet. 1, 18. 19.—He rose to insure our justification, Rom. 4, 25. He lives to confer justification, 1 John 2, 1. 2.

II. *The manner, source, and medium of justification.*

a. The *manner* is: "freely." Justification is an act of divine love and mercy, and not the fruit of human merit.

b. The *source* is "His grace." The grace of God is an overflowing fountain of love and joy, and every blessing, Eph. 1, 7. 2 Tim. 1, 9.

c. The *medium* is faith, Eph. 2, 8. 9. Faith is a firm confidence in the love and mercy of God in Christ Jesus.—To be justified by faith means that a person by true and living faith in Christ Jesus obtains and appropriates to himself the righteousness of Christ Jesus. The moment we believe in Christ Jesus our justification is as perfect as the infinite worthiness of Christ, our Redeemer. There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are (believe) in Christ Jesus.

Blest is the man, forever blest,
Whose guilt is pardoned by his God,
Whose sins with sorrow are confessed,
And covered with his Savior's blood.

J. C. A.

Miscellaneous.

Perspicuity of Style. The most important property of style is perspicuity. Style is excellent when, like atmosphere, it shows the thought, but itself is not seen. . . . A certain grand-looking obscurity is often pleasing to some hearers and readers, who suppose that it shows vast learning, or great originality, or immense profundity. To treat subjects in this fashion is no new thing. Quintilian says it was not new in his day, for that he found mention in Livy of a teacher who used to direct his pupils to darken the idea. . . . A preacher is more solemnly bound than any other person, to make his language perspicuous. This is very important in wording a law, in writing a title-deed, or in a physician's prescription, but still more important in proclaiming the Word of God, words of eternal life.

It is also true that a preacher has greater difficulty than any other class of speakers in making his style perspicuous to *all* his hearers, for no others speak to so heterogeneous an audience, includ-

ing persons of both sexes, of every age, from early childhood, and of every grade of intellect and culture. But this difficulty, when most deeply felt, should but stimulate to diligent and most painstaking effort. For what is the use of preaching, unless we may hope to do good? And what good can be done, save in proportion as we are understood? Pretentious obscurity may excite a poor admiration, unmeaning prettiness may give a certain pleasure, mere vociferation,—like Bottom's part, "nothing but roaring,"—may affect some people's nerves; but only truth, and truth that is understood, can bring real benefit. Moreover, something worse may happen than the failure to do good; we may do harm. Some hearers are repelled and disgusted by obscurity. Others are misled. It is a mournful thing to think of, but one of not infrequent occurrence, that men should so misunderstand us as to take what we meant for medicine and convert it into poison. As we love men's souls we must strive to prevent so dreadful a result. One cannot expect, as Quintilian already remarks, "that the hearer will be so intent upon understanding as to cast upon the darkness of the speech a light from his own intelligence." What we say must be made so clear that it will pour into his mind as the sun pours into his eyes, even when they are not directed toward it. We must take care, not that it shall be possible for him to understand, but that it shall be utterly impossible for him not to understand. The German philosopher Fichte wrote a treatise with this title: "An account clear as the sun, of the real nature of my philosophy; an attempt to compel the reader to understand." None but a very self-confident man would put forth such a title; but it indicates what every teacher of men ought to aim at, not arrogantly but resolutely,—to compel the reader or hearer to understand. (Broadus, *Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, pp. 339 sqq.)

Rest. A story is told of Benjamin Parsons, in his day an eminent preacher of the Gospel. He was lying on his deathbed, and a friend who was visiting him asked, "Well, how is it with you?" "I am resting sweetly," was the reply, "on three pillows—Infinite power, Infinite love, and Infinite grace."

Sermons and Railroads. William M. Eyarts is said to have remarked jocosely to Chauncey M. Depew that some of his speeches were like some of his railroads, "lacking in close connections and terminal facilities." We might add that some sermons are also deficient in straight lines of treatment, and in proper ballast.

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